

SEPARATE LIQUOR FROM POLITICS

ELECT

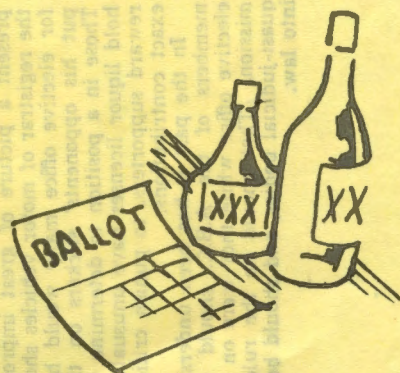
Michael J. Murtagh MAYOR

Portrait of O'Donnell ...

"PICTURE
OF

GREAT IMPROPRIETY"

THE BOSTON GLOBE



The Political Circuit:

Should ABC Members Seek Elective Office?

By JOHN HARRIS

If you have been reading the Globe's stories on the city elections that come next Tuesday you must have noticed

something different from all past city elections.

It is this:

Members of the State's Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission are running for Mayor and other local office.

Indeed, a check shows that ALL three of the present members of the State's ABC Commission are presently candidates. Chairman James D. O'Brien, Worcester City Councilor, seeks reelection. Mayor Philip C. O'Donnell seeks reelection in Peabody. Norman E. Moore is running for Mayor in Newton.

What's so different about this?

The fact that a member of a quasi-judicial state commission would run for elective office. True, there is no law against it. But not since the ABC Commission was established in 1933, after repeal of prohibition, has a member ever run for office. And now, breaking precedent, all three are doing so.

The situation calls for some review.

Back in 1952 when the late Gov. Paul A. Dever had to pick an ABC chairman he chose Daniel F. Moriarty of Lowell. Moriarty had been a Lowell City Councilor, state representative and register of deeds.

Before Dever would name him to the ABC, however, there was an understanding that Moriarty would not seek elective office. Moriarty did not run.

After prohibition, the ABC was established to supervise liquor traffic from manufacture to selling, protect the quality of liquor as described on the labels, and act as an appellate board over all local liquor licensing boards. This last duty, a quasi-judicial one, carries authority to overrule local boards on issuing licenses.

In the background of creation of the ABC was the desire to separate, as far as possible, liquor traffic and politics. For there was a time, prior to prohibition, when licenses in many a community were at stake in local elections. Instances of this was a sweeping change of licensees according to which administration won City Hall.

One of the changes, therefore, made under ABC was to give licensees some rights when they come up for renewal of their licenses.

This was to help end liquor traffic taking a hand in local elections.

No question is raised here that there has been a revival of practices that existed before the days of the ABC. The question raised is whether the breaking of precedent might not in the future invite a return to practices the ABC was established to avoid. The question should be reviewed by the incoming Legislature.

THE BOSTON GLOBE

IMPROPER FOR
O'DONNELL TO RUN

LIQUOR JOB GIVES O'DONNELL "UNUSUAL POWER TO REWARD
SUPPORTERS, TO PUNISH CRITICS, AND TO EXACT CONTRIBUTIONS"

PLUS \$7,600 EXTRA

Highly Improper

The Alcoholic Beverages Commission was established in an attempt to free liquor from politics. Among its functions is to hear appeals from local licensing boards. This gives license holders some protection against discrimination and reprisals when there is an overturn in a city or town administration.

The commission is a quasi-judicial body, and should be impartial in appearance as well as fact. That its three members include the mayor of Peabody and a Worcester city councilor has made some citizens uncomfortable. But worse has followed. These two

colleague is seeking the Newton mayoralty.

They are violating no law, but they present a picture of great impropriety. If the registrar of motor vehicles should stand for elective office many would hesitate to put his opponents' stickers on their cars. Those in a position to determine who shall hold liquor licenses have unusual power to reward supporters, to punish critics and to exact contributions.

In the past it has been understood that members of the A.B.C. should not seek elective office while they were on the commission. That should be the rule for all quasi-judicial bodies, and should be written into law.

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